

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 318

By Eldridge

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Marty Stuart.

WHEREAS, country music has formed a vital part of Tennessee's cultural heritage for many decades; in its myriad forms and subgenres, country music has long served to encapsulate and carry forward many of the bedrock themes and values that have made this State culturally distinct among the United States; and

WHEREAS, country music has benefitted from the work and dedication of many exceptional musicians who not only have striven to preserve its foundational traditions, but also have brought their own unique creativity to bear on the genre, thereby ensuring that country music will continue to thrive and bring joy to fans around the world for years to come; and

WHEREAS, one such estimable country musician is Marty Stuart, who has labored assiduously in the tradition of this uniquely American art form while infusing it with his own innovative spirit and connecting it with other vital American musical genres as well; and

WHEREAS, during his childhood in Philadelphia, Mississippi, Marty Stuart spent many of his Saturdays watching country music shows on his family's black-and-white television set with his father, who worked long hours at a local factory during the week; and

WHEREAS, by the age of twelve, Marty Stuart was playing mandolin with the Sullivan Family, an Alabama bluegrass and gospel group; as a member of a very particular milieu, he was attending the occasional church service along with regular bluegrass festivals; and

WHEREAS, not long after he joined the Sullivan Family group, he received an offer to play for Lester Flatt and the Nashville Grass, with whom he toured and recorded for most of the 1970s; and

WHEREAS, one early tour with Mr. Flatt's band involved a date at Michigan State University; the night's bill included the Eagles, Gram Parsons, and Emmylou Harris. For the first time, Mr. Stuart understood how country music and rock'n'roll could be merged without compromising either form, and he later applied this important lesson in making his own solo albums in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, while playing with Lester Flatt and the Nashville Grass, Marty Stuart also met and performed with Bill Monroe, the legendary bluegrass musician; and

WHEREAS, after brief stints with Vassar Clements and Doc Watson in the wake of Lester Flatt's death in 1979, Mr. Stuart embarked upon six years of touring with one of his musical idols, Johnny Cash; even after Marty Stuart moved on to his own solo career, he continued to rely on Mr. Cash as a friend and mentor; and

WHEREAS, with his eponymous third solo album, a big-budget, country-rock effort for Columbia Records, Marty Stuart joined "The Class of 1986," a group of young country musicians cited by critics for their unique and refreshing sound, which included elements of older music even as it introduced innovations that propelled the genre forward into new territory; and

WHEREAS, all too soon, however, Mr. Stuart's relationship with his record label became problematic; while he wanted to release *Let There Be Country*, a record that represented a revival of the hard-charging Bakersfield honky-tonk sound, Columbia Records wanted him to record something very different; and

WHEREAS, unable to reconcile his artistic vision with the commercial pressures brought to bear by the label, Mr. Stuart moved to MCA, with whom he released the 1989 album *Hillbilly Rock*; and

WHEREAS, after a brief encounter with country music legend George Jones, he discovered that many others shared his faith in the roots of country music; in 1991, Mr. Jones invited Marty Stuart to join him on an album of duets, *The Bradley Barn Sessions*, which brought together rock'n'roll luminaries, such as Keith Richards, and veteran country musicians to create music that blends and highlights two distinct musical traditions; and

WHEREAS, Marty Stuart enjoyed a number of hits throughout the decade that followed; a few emerged from his early 1990s collaboration with Travis Tritt, with whom he toured in 1992. Mr. Stuart wrote several of the songs that appear on Mr. Tritt's albums of the mid-1990s; and

WHEREAS, after the MCA albums *This One's Gonna Hurt You*, *Love and Luck*, *Honky Tonkin's What I Do Best*, and *Not Fade Away (Remembering Buddy Holly)*, Mr. Stuart completed his contract with the label in 1999 by releasing *The Pilgrim*, a concept album based on a true story of loss and redemption from his hometown in Mississippi; the work brought Mr. Stuart significant critical acclaim; and

WHEREAS, several collaborations with members of the Staples Singers highlighted the close connections between country, blues, and gospel; in 2001, before the members of the Mississippi State Senate, Mr. Stuart and Pops Staples were both inducted into the Mississippi Music Hall of Fame in a ceremony at the Mississippi State Capitol in Jackson; and

WHEREAS, shortly after the turn of the century, Marty Stuart assembled a band of some of country music's finest musicians, who were soon dubbed the Fabulous Superlatives; the four men have recorded four albums together, beginning with 2003's, *Country Music*; and

WHEREAS, the band's 2006 release, *Live at the Ryman*, is a showcase of the group's bluegrass talent; and

WHEREAS, his 2007 album, entitled *Compadres: An Anthology of Duets*, is a testament to one of the most important lessons Mr. Stuart has learned over the course of his career: his success could not have been possible were it not for the mentors who guided him and the partners who worked beside him; and

WHEREAS, since 1997, Marty Stuart has shared his success with his beloved wife, country music star Connie Smith; Mr. Stuart first saw his bride-to-be when she performed at the Choctaw Indian Fair in Philadelphia, Mississippi; although he was a young boy then, he declared to his mother that he would marry the singer someday. Twenty-five years later, he did; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Stuart's career has included a series of important partnerships, almost all of which have demonstrated his deep respect for tradition, his drive to create collaboratively,

and his intense interest in America's unique musical forms; these core values and motivations have driven American artists, especially those of the Southeast, for generations; and

WHEREAS, thanks to musicians like Marty Stuart, the cultural traditions of the Southeastern United States will continue to influence generations to come; the people of Tennessee are fortunate indeed to count Mr. Stuart among our ranks; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Marty Stuart for his lifelong dedication to that most vital of American art forms, country music; thank him for the work he has done to ensure that the cultural traditions of the Southeastern United States will live on for the benefit of generations to come; and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.